

Ryan Padraig Kelly

I set about my psychogeographic wander late in the evening. It is dark now and the rain from earlier has subsided. I had not planned on any particular route – other than just to be led freely by my surroundings for about 20 – 30 minutes.

With the hope of being a little more aimless, I decided to take the road less travelled outside my house on headed off in the direction of the crescent. As the name suggests the crescent has a gentle curve and is met by sea road at the apex of this curve. A terrace of stately Georgian

mansions lines the crescent, with plaques on their doors indicating private surgeries and solicitors' offices within. Under tall, manicured trees, the range rovers and bmws sloppily parked on double yellow lines outside bolster the perception of respectability in this middleclass area. I head down Searoad wondering if I'll ever be able to afford such a house on such a street. I decide I wouldn't, as I reach the Crane Bar.

I side step a group of tourists fumbling the door outside the pub, walk through a plume of cigarette smoke and hang a sharp left to head up past the bell book and

candle. This is a very old, residential part of Galway city and it seems to resonate with me as I walk along. The street lamps become less frequent, and cats hop in and out of the shadows. I smell the smoke from the chimneys of these modest homes, and I can see the flicker of televisions through old fashioned netted blinds. It reminds me of my grandparent's street although it bears little resemblance. It crosses my mind that this little street would be great for playing football on if you were a kid.

Further up the street I am reminded of a dark alley that hugs

the wall of the now derelict  
Connacht laundries. It emerges at  
the back of the fish shop on Henry  
Street. This alley is dark and  
almost exclusively used by  
teenagers to smoke and drink. I  
stroll up cautiously dodging  
potholes and broken glass and  
suddenly it is pitch black. I hear the  
wind howl through the broken  
windows of the laundry. I notice I  
take my hands out of my pockets  
(in case something happens!) and I  
am in a state of alert. I emerge the  
other side unscathed back into the  
safety of the streetlamps. I notice  
my heart rate dropping back to  
normal.

I decide to cross Henry Street and cut through to the canal. I am usually drawn to canals when I walk around this city. The idea of walking alongside water without having to contend with cars is always the more attractive option. The running water seems to have a calming effect. This time however, the noise of the river has me fixated. I'm looking out for ducks but there are none to be seen. I begin thinking that possibly they could be asleep at this time (never considered the nocturnal activity of ducks before).

I resolve to start thinking about a route home. I end up choosing a

route where I might see some people and pass a shop. I don't need to buy anything, or see people, but the last 20 minutes had been introspective and lonely in a way. Realising this subconscious effort to have an interaction with something or someone, reminds me of how I am led by this city construct. It's nature determines where, when and how, I move.